

## Police appeal to the public not to take part in, advertise or publicise any unauthorised assemblies

An organiser filed a notification to hold a public meeting on Hong Kong Island tomorrow (June 4). Considering public safety, public order, people's rights and freedom, and the serious health risks brought by the ongoing pandemic to the society, Police have reasonable grounds to believe that the holding of the event will pose considerable threats to the public health and lives and issued a notice of prohibition to the organiser. On May 29, the Appeal Board on Public Meetings and Processions upheld Police's decision after hearing.

It must be reiterated that participating in an unauthorised assembly risks committing offences under the Public Order Ordinance, and on conviction, shall be liable to a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment. Besides, participating in public gatherings may also breach the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) regarding prohibited group gatherings.

In addition, the Court's recent rulings on two cases of unauthorised assembly (public meeting and procession on August 18 and August 31, 2019) show that participating in an unauthorised assembly, whether involving violence or not, breaks the law. People involved in the case were eventually sentenced to different imprisonment terms. The Court also sentenced the defendants to prison for four to 10 months in a case of "knowingly participating in an unauthorised assembly" on June 4, 2020.

Police appeal to members of the public to refrain from participating in, advertising or publicising any unauthorised assemblies and prohibited gatherings. It should be stressed that any group gatherings taking place during the ongoing pandemic can also increase the risk of spreading the virus. Police will deploy adequate manpower in relevant locations on the day and take resolute action to enforce the law, including making arrests.